

Minutes of the Board Meeting  
February 7, 2023  
1:30 pm

Attendance

**Commissioners Present**

Manuel Lopez Ramirez, Chair	Rev. Juan Rivera
Daniel Molina, Vice-Chair	Yahaira Rose
Michael Florez	Mary Santiago
Maria Sylvia Martinez	Tony Simms-Howell

**Commissioners Absent**

José Feliciano, Jr.—Excused  
Beth Guzman Bowman—  
Excused  
Dr. Greg Guzmán— Excused

**Manuel Lopez Ramirez**  
Chair  
Springfield

**Dan Molina**  
Vice Chair  
Loveland

**Jose Feliciano Jr.**  
Secretary  
Aurora

**Michael Florez**  
Cincinnati

**Gregory Guzmán, Ph.D.**  
Maumee

**Beth Guzmán-Bowman**  
Columbus

**Maria Sylvia Martinez**  
Hamler

**Rev. Juan Rivera**  
Campbell

**Yahaira Rose**  
Westerville

**Mary Santiago**  
Lorain

**V. Anthony Simms-Howell**  
Cincinnati

**Staff Present**

Lilleana Cavanaugh, Executive Director  
Michelle S. Goodman, Administrative Assistant  
Annabel Meleán, Public Policy Officer  
Mary Grace Sanchez, Community Liaison

**Legislative Members Present**

(none)

**Legal Representation Present**

AG Daniel Nunner

**Public Present**

Daniel Nilsson  
Martin Iniguez-Diaz  
(OCHLA Intern)

**Al Cutrona**  
State Representative  
District 58 - Mahoning County

**Jessica Miranda**  
State Representative  
District 28 - Hamilton County

**Nathan Manning**  
State Senator  
District 13 - Huron & Lorain  
Counties

**Call to Order**

Chair Lopez Ramirez calls the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Commissioner Rev. Juan Rivera leads the group in prayer. Commissioner Tony Simms-Howell requests a moment of silence for the recent passing of Representative Dan Ramos. The groups observes a moment of silence. Commissioner Mary Santiago shares a few words about Representative Ramos. Commissioner Michael Florez leads the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chair Molina takes the Roll Call.

**Call of the Roll**

There are 8 Commissioners present, thus constituting quorum.

**Chair's Report**

Chair Lopez Ramirez shares that he recently met with the Director of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the director expressed his pride in his Hispanic heritage. The two were able to talk a bit and begin building a relationship. Secondly, Chair Lopez Ramirez introduced the new Commissioner, Yahaira Rose. The new Commissioner is the



President and Founder of Proyecto Mariposas, which is a non-profit that provides an environment of learning, sharing, and support to Latina Girls and their mothers. Chair Lopez Ramirez thanks the new Commissioner for joining the OCHLA Board and assisting with the OCHLA mission.

Assistant Attorney General Daniel Nunner swears in the new Commissioner, Yahaira Rose. Afterward, Commissioner Rose thanks the OCHLA Board.

### **Motion #2-01-2023**

Commissioner Mary Santiago motions to approve the December 2022 Board Meeting Minutes as submitted. Commissioner Rev. Juan Rivera seconds the motion. Vote 8-0. Motion carries.

### **Agency Report**

Executive Director Lilleana Cavanaugh welcomes Commissioner Rose to the OCHLA Board of Commissioners. Director Cavanaugh begins the Agency Report by describing the flurry of activity during the months of December and January, as the team wraps up projects from 2022 and shifts into the projects of the new year. In January the Annual Report was published and distributed to State Government Agencies, the legislature, the Commissioners, and the public.

Director Cavanaugh describes 2022 as a transitional year and a year of recovery from the pandemic. There were several changes in staff during this time. As well, there were not as many opportunities to do events and outreach; instead the OCHLA team focused on doing significant work in building connections, particularly working to represent the voice of Latinos with the State Government.

During January, the additional \$150,000 was secured for the Latino Mental Health Navigator Grant (LHMN). OCHLA received the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for this and the Team will be going to the Controlling Board to see approval to use this \$150,000, which will bring the total amount obtained for the LHMN Grant to nearly \$889,000.

A Latino Community Report (LCR) will be launched on February 15th and it focuses on H-2A migrant workers. The LCR was somewhat delayed and was originally hoped to be released by January, but it will be released with a Roundtable on the topic, which will be held in conjunction with the Ohio State University Department of Agriculture's Extension. During the Roundtable, the co-author for the report will present the findings of the report and there will also be a panel of speakers who will talk on the topic. The event will be available in a hybrid-mode, with the opportunities to attend in-person or via Zoom. The Report shares stories of who the H-2A workers are, how they come to Ohio, where they work, their experiences once they are in Ohio, and what employers have to say about the importance of this workforce for the agricultural sector in our state. The Latino Community Report will be available on the OCHLA website and it will be shared with the Commissioners, as well as the hyperlink to register via Zoom for the Roundtable.

Director Cavanaugh shares that OCHLA was able to have a meeting with the Department of Workforce Transformation (DWT). More about this information will be shared during the Committee Updates, but together, OCHLA and DWT were able to identify two initiatives to champion for the upcoming year.



Other events on the horizon are the Hispanic Legislative Visit Day (set for April 25th), which is in the planning and solidification stages and the Latino Affairs Summit, which is scheduled for September 15th in collaboration with Kent State University. Daniel Nilsson, from Kent State University is in attendance and will discuss a bit more about this collaboration during this Board Meeting during the Public Commentary.

Public Policy Officer Annabel Meleán shares information about the Hispanic Legislative Visit Day (LVD). The LVD agendas have been shared with the Commissioners. The Legislative Visit Day will include two panels focused on Education and Mental health, then it will transition to the various workshops. There will be a workshop for students and two workshops for the general public.

Commissioner Rev. Juan Rivera asks if there will be an opportunity for the Board to come and stay the night before the event, since the event begins at 9am. Executive Director Cavanaugh states that staying the night before the event is permitted and that arrangements can be made accordingly.

Public Policy Officer Annabel Meleán adds that OCHLA has been collaborating with Ohio TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Esperanza, Inc. in order to prepare an Educational Advocacy workshop during the LVD as well. The goal is to help educators, those from the general public concerned about education, and legislators to discuss topics and various concerns about education in Ohio.

Public Policy Officer Annabel Meleán updates the Board regarding several bills of particular interest to the Commission and PPO Meleán adds that further information about these bills, and additional bills, will be included in the Public Policy Newsletter:

#### Senate Bill 1 (SB1)

This bill seeks to reform the State Board of Education. Currently the State Board of Education oversees many of Ohio's educational standards and is separate from the Ohio Department of Education, which falls under the Governor's purview. This bill would transfer the State Board of Education's responsibilities to the Ohio Department of Education. These responsibilities include overseeing the State's minimum learning standards, graduation requirements, school district report cards, etc. This bill has raised some concerns with Ohio's teachers and has been of particular interest for discussion between educators and our legislators.

Commissioner Mary Santiago asks who is sponsoring SB1. PPO Meleán indicates that she does not have that information at hand and will share this once she gets a chance, but she believes it may be Senator Reineke. (PPO Meleán confirms that this bill is indeed sponsored by Senator Reineke.)

#### Senate Bill 9 (SB9)

This bill would amend laws related to medical marijuana.

#### Senate Bill 37 (SB 37)

SB37 would change laws governing driver's license suspensions for drug offenses and failure to pay child support.

#### Senate Bill 3 (SB3)

SB3 would create the Ohio Community Revitalization Program, which would authorize non-refundable income tax credits for individuals who are working on community projects.



Executive Director Cavanaugh reminds the Board of the recent State of the State Address given by Governor Dewine. Director Cavanaugh emphasizes the importance of this address, particularly in preparation for the Board Retreat and as the Board looks to align its priorities for the upcoming year. As well, she indicates that she will be sending the link to this address so that the Commissioners can listen to the Address.

Commissioner Mary Santiago asks if the Annual Reports were sent to each legislator. Public Policy Officer Annabel Meleán indicates that they all have been sent a copy of the Annual Report.

### **Motion #2-02-2023**

Commissioner Juan Rivera motions to approve the December and January 2023 Monthly Agency Reports as given. Commissioner Maria Sylvia Martinez seconds the motion. Vote 8-0. Motion carries.

### **Fiscal Report**

Vice Chair Daniel Molina presents the Fiscal Report as of January 31st, 2023. Account 500 is the Payroll and during the 1st quarte 21.75% of the payroll was unused, due to vacancies. During the 2nd quarter, there was an increase in expenses due to filling vacancies and this meant 12.15% left unused. We are currently in the 3rd quarter and the payroll will be more accurate during the 3rd and 4th quarters because those vacancies have been filled, and we are now at full capacity.

Account 510 is for Contractors. We are encumbered for \$6,000 for a contractor to assist the Public Policy Officer and a graphic designer to produce our Latino Community Reports.

Account 520 is for Operations. The majority of this spending will take place in Spring and early Summer, with the Legislative Visit Day. As well, there will be travel for community engagements and other outreach that will take place in the second half of the fiscal year.

Account 6010 is the Rainy Day fund and there are no changes on that account.

The Latino Mental Health Navigator Grant Funds are on target. The last report of the 3rd quarter was submitted in January, and it was reviewed and accepted by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS). Vice Chair asks about the amount of the annual budget in comparison with the amount received for the Latino Mental Health Navigator Grant and Director Cavanaugh reminds the Board that the Annual Budget for OCHLA is less than \$500,000. Vice Chair Molina points out that the Navigator grant is nearly double the amount for the OCHLA annual budget and what a large success the Grant has been and that it is a huge 'vote of confidence' to receive and manage such a sum in comparison with the Annual Budget.

### **Motion #2-03-2023**

Commissioner Maria Sylvia Martinez motions to accept the January 31st, 2023 Fiscal Report as given. Commissioner Michael Florez seconds the motion. Vote 8-0. Motion carries.

### **Biennial Budget (FY 24-25)**



Executive Director Lilleana Cavanaugh adds some information about the Biennial Budget, which was submitted the previous week and reports on a slight increase difference between the original budget submitted and the Blue Book. Vice Chair Dan Molina reiterates that such an increase in budget is a great vote of confidence. Commissioner Michael Florez asks if with this increase in budget and the good financial situation if the staff might be entitled to an increase. Commissioner Florez additionally asks if this is a topic that might be included at the Retreat, particularly in light of so many other government agencies receiving increases. Chair Manuel Lopez Ramirez asks if this is something that should be discussed at the retreat.

### **Old Business**

There is no Old Business.

### **New Business**

Chair Lopez Ramirez recognizes Commissioner Yahaira Rose as being new to the Commission and asks if she would like to share some words. Commissioner Rose thanks the Commission for allowing her to serve and be part of the group. She indicates that she has been in the Columbus area for 30 years and it is an honor to serve in such a capacity. She is especially looking forward to working with the Education Summit and learning from those on the Commission.

Chair Lopez Ramirez introduces the Telework Policy Approval and asks Executive Director Lilleana Cavanaugh to give a brief overview of the document and its purpose. Director Cavanaugh clarifies that this document is a Statewide Standard Teleworking Policy, which was prepared and issued by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). DAS has requested that every Board accept the document and be aware of its existence as part of the Policy Manual. The policy defines who, how, and where anyone can do telework. Director Cavanaugh explains that this policy is enterprise-wide and that our team has been working in a hybrid mode in varying degrees since the beginning of the pandemic and that a great number of agencies are also working in hybrid schedules.

The requirement is that there are regularly staffed office hours during the workweek, either 8am-4pm or 9am-5pm, so that our office is available to meet with the public. For the Commission, each staff member will be in the office three days a week and work remotely two days a week, with different staff members covering the office depending upon the day of week, but with no one currently working entirely remotely or entirely in the office. The managers need to have a tracking system to know when staff members are checking in, out, etc. and these are consistent with the timesheets.

All staff members have received Board-approved, State-issued laptops and these are used in conjunction with VPN's and Global Assist to ensure secure methods of accessing email and office documents. As well, the staffers have verified and documented suitable home working environments, which include reliable access to the internet and use of a telephone, whether issued by OCHLA or with access to the office phone through message forwarding options. Staff members are also available via TEAMS and our office holds a daily meeting (M-F) at 930 each day.



There is no additional cost associated with teleworking and there is strict control on data and information. Assignment of work and performance is evaluated on a regular basis. As well, the schedule can always revert back to the regular 'in-person' schedule if needed as well, based on the needs of the team.

Because every State Agency has had different teleworking policies, the Administration developed this Statewide Policy to make sure that Telework is being defined and understood in a uniform manner. Once this Policy is introduced, and if it is accepted, then it will simply be documented that it has been accepted by the Board on this date. The staff have already received a copy and signed it and it becomes part of their records. Director Cavanaugh reiterates that she is not an expert on this document, but will do the best to answer questions and help the Commission understand the Policy.

Commissioner Mary Santiago asks if each staff member will have a phone and if these are the staff member's personal cell phones or if they are OCHLA-provided phones. Commissioner Santiago also asks if someone calls the office if there will someone in the office to answer the phone. Executive Director Cavanaugh explains that each staff member will either have an OCHLA-provided work cell phone assigned to them, which they will be able to answer at home; or, for those staff members who do not have a phone provided, that these staff members will have their office phone numbers forwarded to their personal phones. The staff members will then either answer the call, return the call, or may choose to respond to the call with an email or via TEAMS, depending upon which methods makes the most sense for that team member at the time. Director Cavanaugh ensures that the office phone is being answered and the office voicemail is being checked regularly. Due to the staff's busy schedule, it is possible that a staff member may need to rely on voicemail messages since the team is often in attendance in meetings (in-person or virtually) and may be unable to talk via phone at all times.

### **Motion #2-04-2023**

Commissioner Dan Molina motions to approve the Teleworking Policy, HR-32. Second by Commissioner Rev. Juan Rivera.

Roll Call requested:

Chair Manuel Lopez Ramirez: Yay.

Commissioner Michael Florez: Yay.

Commissioner Beth Guzmán-Bowman: (excused absence)

Commissioner Dr. Gregory Guzmán: (unexcused absence)

Commissioner Maria Sylvia Martinez: Yay.

Commissioner Reverend Juan Rivera: Yay.

Commissioner Yahaira Rose: Yay.

Commissioner Mary Santiago: Yay.

Commissioner Vestal "Tony" Simms-Howell: Abstention.

Vote: 7 'yays', and 1 abstention.

Motion carries.

Chair Lopez-Ramirez and Executive Director Cavanaugh lead the Board in discussion about the upcoming Board Retreat. Director Cavanaugh reminds the Board that due to the shifted date for the Legislative Visit Day, that a decision needed to be made about when the Commissioners would like to hold the Board Re-



treat. The Legislative Visit Day was shifted to April 25th, and the Board Meeting is scheduled for April 4th, which would mean that the Commissioners would be traveling to Columbus twice in one month. The options are 1. to hold the Board Meeting and Retreat on April 4th and hold the Legislative Visit Day on April 25th or 2. to hold the Board Meetings and Retreat the day after Legislative Visit Day.

Commissioner Santiago asks if the budget would allow to stay overnight before the Board Meeting and before the Legislative Visit Day if the events are not held on back-to-back days. Director Cavanaugh states that the budget will allow for this because the staff has not done much travel due to the pandemic, so that there is flexibility in this way.

Commissioner Molina expresses his concerns for the intensive nature of the Retreat and the business of the Legislative Visit Day as well. With this, he suggests spacing them out so that each of them can be focused on individually. Commissioner Florez expresses this sentiment as well, indicating that the Retreat is 'more than enough' in its own right and that due to the intensive nature of the Retreat and that the commissioners have traditionally been exhausted and eager to return home afterward. Commissioner Florez also expresses that holding them separately would allow for greater focus on each. Commissioner Rose states that she is supportive of whatever plan is the most cost effective. Commissioner Molina responds that it seems that because the funds are available, that it appears to be 'cost neutral'. Chair Lopez-Ramirez agrees that his preference would be for two different days (not back-to-back) for the events.

The Board verbally agrees that the Board Meeting and Retreat will remain on April 4th and the Legislative Visit Day will be held on April 25th. (Executive Director Cavanaugh is dismissed to attend a different meeting.)

Chair Lopez-Ramirez reminds the commissioners to complete their Financial Disclosures and that they should have all received an email with this information, which includes the due date as well. Commissioner Florez reminds the Commissioners that there is a penalty of \$50 per day past the deadline if a Commissioner's Financial Disclosure has not been completed and the Commissioner will be charged this fee.

#### **Committee Updates:**

The various committees share their updates.

#### **Education Committee:**

Commissioner Maria Sylvia Martinez shares that the Education Committee discussed the Cupp-Patterson Bill. This bill is connected with English Language Learners and the amount of funding they receive, based on the assessment of each student's language level. These levels would include 'emerging' students and 'progressing' students. Prior to the bill, there had been analysis of the English Language Learners (ELL's) and their needs, in order to help determine what kind of support and funding would be most fitting.

Commissioner Simms-Howell raises his concerns for the amount of teachers retiring, specifically within such districts as the Cincinnati School District. His concern is the shortage of teachers and the great need for good teachers being in short supply means that schools are not able to meet the needs of their Latino students. He asks that this topic be further investigated.





**Health Committee:**

Commissioner Beth Guzmán-Bowman was not present (excused absence), so this committee did not meet.

**Civic Engagement Committee:**

Public Policy Officer Annabel Meleán shares that the Civic Engagement Committee discussed the bill regarding voter state ID requirements being changed. This would require State ID's to identify whether or not the ID holder is a citizen or a non-citizen. This bill was of particular concern within the Latino Community. The bill will be enacted in March and there are several other voter ID registration changes that were made on the bill. The Commission, and this Committee in particular, is trying to get information about these changes out to the constituency through the various community networks. There are concerns about the number of people who have suspended driver's licenses and well as the logistics for obtaining the new state ID's.

Commissioner Florez asks about the additional changes and the constitutional aspects of the bill. Public Policy Officer Annabel Meleán clarifies that some of the changes include no longer being able to use utility statements as a proof of address and that there have also been decreased hours and number of days for early voting. PPO Meleán indicates that all of these specifics are in a PDF included with the Legislative Update, which will help with guidance about what documents can be used while voting.

Commissioner Simms-Howell reiterates the importance of the legislative updates and raises his concern about trying to get this information out to the public, and specifically to the Latino Community. He asks the PPO Meleán leverage the Commissioners more to help her spread this information so that she is not trying to tackle the task solely by herself and he asks that the legislative updates be distributed as soon as possible so that the Commissioners can get the information to their regions in order to react to the proposed legislation in a timely manner.

**DHO Committee:**

Commissioner Mary Santiago states that the DHO awardees will be recognized during the Legislative Visit Day lunch.

Commissioner Simms-Howell expresses his concern about Latino Businesses running into issues with the Attorney General's office and various collection agencies because of confusion and delays between the offices' communications, which results with Latino, Black and Brown Businesses being referred to Tax Collection disproportionately, when there is not actually a debt that is owed. Commissioner Simms-Howell states that he is seeing this issue State-wide, but that he has helped on some of these cases in the Cincinnati/Dayton area. He mentions that this is also on the radar of the African American Chambers of Commerce right now as well and that there are also funds available for small businesses, but that this information needs to be circulated and more widely known.

**Workforce and Economic Development Committee:**

Vice Chair Dan Molina highlights that the Committee continues with a collaborative approach. With this, they were able to meet with the Office of Workforce Transformation. From this, there are now two focus areas within high school tech: internships and micro-credentialing (specific, focused, 'mini' certifications).





The jobs webpage has been reignited and the Committee members have also had meetings with the [Hispanic] Chambers of Commerce. The Committee also discussed the Legislative Visit Day and the Latino Affairs Summit. Vice Chair Molina briefly discusses the scope of the Brent Spence Bridge and shows a brief video of the ‘flyover’ of the corridor. He discusses the potential for small businesses to be part of the project and that the planning is currently in progress with opportunities for Hispanic and Latino Small Businesses, specifically with potential designations as “DBE’s” (Disadvantaged Business Enterprises). He notes that there will be much more information on this project in the upcoming months.

### **Motion #2-05-2023**

Commissioner Mary Santiago motions to move to Public Commentary. Commissioner Rev. Juan Rivera seconds the motion. Vote 8-0. Motion carries.

### **Public Commentary:**

Daniel Nilsson is the Director of Outreach from Kent State University. Mr. Nilsson is the Kent State ‘point’ person for the Latino Affair Summit, on which Kent State and OCHLA are collaborating. Mr. Nilsson briefly presents some of the details about the upcoming Latino Summit, which will include a hybrid option for attendance and will occur on September 15th, 2023. The Summit will be held in both English and Spanish languages. As well, there will be various tracks to choose from for the event and one of the tracks will be specifically targeted toward students.

Commissioner Rivera asks which schools will be receiving invitations to the Latino Affairs Summit. Mr. Nilsson indicated that they are open to options for who to invite.

Martin Iniguez-Diaz is one of the interns from Ohio State University who is volunteering with OCHLA this semester. Martin is studying Aerospace and has experience both in Spanish and Portuguese languages.

Commissioner Simms-Howell reminds the Commission of Black History Month as well as the upcoming Women’s History Month and the contributions that both groups have made, particularly within the Commission’s purview.

### **Motion #2-06-2023**

Commissioner Michael Florez motions to adjourn the Board Meeting. Commissioner Rev. Juan Rivera seconds the motion. Vote 8-0. Motion carries.

Chair Lopez Ramirez adjourns the Board Meeting at 3:05 pm.

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Signature and Date

Manuel Lopez Ramirez, Chair

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Signature and Date

José Feliciano Jr., Secretary



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**February 7, 2023**  
**Motions Carried**

Motion # 2.01.2023	To approve the December 2022 Board Meeting Minutes.
Motion # 2.02.2023	To approve the December and January 2023 Monthly Agency Reports as given.
Motion # 2.03.2023	To accept the January 31st, 2023 Fiscal Report as given.
Motion # 2.04.2023	To approve the Teleworking Policy, HR-32.
Motion # 2.05.2023	To move to Public Commentary.
Motion # 2.06.2023	To adjourn the Board Meeting.

**February 7, 2023**  
**Attachments**

DOCUMENT	AUTHOR
December 2022 Agency Report	Executive Director Cavanaugh
January 2023 Agency Report	Executive Director Cavanaugh
Fiscal Report ending January 31, 2023	Executive Director Cavanaugh
February Board Meeting Agenda	Executive Director Cavanaugh
December 2022 Board Meeting Minutes	Executive Director Cavanaugh

